

DISTRICT NURSES TO MAORIS.

There are now twenty-three district nurses to Maoris in the service of the Department or under Hospital Boards. The majority are doubly qualified, and among them are three of Maori blood. With a few exceptions, their salaries are paid by the Department, while the Hospital Board concerned is usually responsible for their accommodation and means of transport.

The Department deeply regrets to record the death of one of this splendid band of nurses, Miss M. Jarrett, who for some eleven or twelve years was a most devoted and enthusiastic worker in her own particular district. Her sudden death was a great blow to the people among whom she lived, and who will long remember her unselfishness and kindness. She never spared herself, and will be long remembered as an example of one of the finest types of the nursing profession.

J. BICKNELL,
Director, Division of Nursing.

PART VI.—MAORI HYGIENE.

I have the honour to submit a brief annual report of the work done by the Division of Maori Hygiene for the year ended the 31st March, 1928.

GENERAL HEALTH.

The general health of the Native people throughout the Dominion has, on the whole, been even better than the previous year. This has been brought about by the improvements in living-conditions generally and the continual supervision of the villages by our district nurses, Maori Council organizations, personal visits of myself and other officers of the Department. Another important factor is the younger and more enlightened Natives assuming control over affairs within the villages, and thus casting aside the ideas of their elders, who in the past have been content to carry on in the less up-to-date methods of local control. The education received by the younger people and their desire to Europeanize as far as possible their own people in matters of general health is being reflected in a marked degree, to the credit of those concerned and to the advantage and betterment of conditions amongst the people. The change of control to the younger Natives has been at all times advocated by the Division, believing it to be the basis of a better system whereby health conditions specially could be better cared for, and, in so far as the past year's work in this direction is concerned, the improvements so effected have certainly been most encouraging.

The continued individualization of Native lands by the Native Land Court is a decided factor to be considered in the general improvement of health conditions, as by these methods the overcrowding problem is gradually being overcome—a most important matter, especially where Native people are concerned.

The installation of water-supplies by the Division has no doubt assisted greatly in the improved health conditions, and this branch of the work still continues to receive special attention; and, in this connection the Division has laid out supplies in the following Native settlements, at a total cost of (£1,850), to be met by subsidy and Native contributions: Waimiha, Waikato; Orakei, Auckland; Oruanui, Taupo; Te Kao, North Auckland; Te Hapua, North Auckland; Wairoa, Tauranga; Bethlehem, Tauranga; Whangara, East Coast.

SANITARY IMPROVEMENTS.

The improvements in the sanitary condition of the villages continues to progress in a very satisfactory manner. The erection of latrine accommodation is now recognized by the Natives to be essential in the interests of health, and in very rare instances is this not to be found. Not only are the communal meeting-houses provided with the necessary conveniences for both sexes, but many private homes also have their privy accommodation established. The Village Committees operating under the Maori Councils are largely responsible for this work, and they also insist upon the proper supervision and cleansing of these buildings. When *huis* or gatherings are in progress squads of men are detailed off to attend to all matters incidental thereto, and everything is attended to in a systematic manner. The refuse of gatherings is dealt with by burning or burial, and the sanitation of the villages becomes a routine matter. The improvements effected in this direction, to what it was a few years ago, are most marked, and reflect the greatest credit not only upon the Natives themselves, but the Department upon whose shoulders rests the responsibility and care of health matters of the Native race. Gatherings and *huis* a few years ago were looked upon with fear as a menace to the health of the populace generally: not so to-day. The advice of the Department is sought and carried into effect, and the improved conditions of the villages are portrayed in the lessened incidence of sickness and disease caused by the evil sanitary conditions of the past.

A drainage scheme has been laid out at the Te Kuiti Native Pa, which entails the extension of the borough sewer, the erection of six up-to-date w.c.s and latrine accommodation, and the drainage of all waste water from the cooking-houses, the total cost of which is estimated at £277. The Natives have agreed not only to contribute £100 in cash, but will supply labour equal to a further amount of £77, the balance of £100 to be asked for by way of subsidy. The matter at present is under further consideration. Such a scheme—the largest yet proposed—gives some indication of the desires of the Natives to improve the sanitary conditions within their villages, and is a decided forward movement to better the conditions of the past.